

Department of Corrections Advisory Council
Meeting Minutes
June 4, 2007
Capitol - Helena, MT

Members Present

Lt. Gov. Bohlinger, Dave Castle, Steve Gallus, Gail Gutsche, Bob Ross, Mikie Baker-Hajek, Mike Cooney, George Corn, Dorothy Bradley, Tim Callahan, Penny Kipp, Allan Underdal, Red Menahan, Jim Shockley, and Valarie Weber.

Meeting was called to order by Chairman Bohlinger at 9 a.m. Minutes were moved to be approved as written on motion of Sen. Gallus and seconded by Mr. Menahan. Motion passed unanimously.

Old Business

Corrections Updates:

Pam Bunke, Adult Community Corrections Division Administrator gave a overview on adult community corrections programs. Starting January 2007, the following treatment and prerelease beds have been added to programs:

- Passages, the former Howard Johnson Motel, located in Billings was transformed into three distinct community based programs. The female prerelease from Alternatives, of 25 beds, was moved to Passages with an addition of 40 female prerelease beds. The other two floors are the Assessment and Sanction Center, consisting of 50 beds, and the Addictions and Treatment Center a 60 day drug treatment program with 40 beds. June 28, 2007 will be the dedication of this new facility. Passages staff have proposed a culinary arts industry program for the department to consider.
- April 9 was the dedication of Elkhorn in Boulder, the new 40 bed methamphetamine treatment program for females. To date there are 23 offenders in placement with one return to the Montana Women's Prison.
- The Great Falls PRC dedicated an additional 40 male prerelease beds on April 20.
- June 1 was the opening of the Nexus center in Lewistown a 9 month methamphetamine program for 80 males to be followed by 6 months of prerelease. Currently there are 14 offenders in treatment with weekly admissions of 12 to 14 offenders. 56 male offenders have been screened and accepted at Nexus.

Adding these programs has relieved the pressure at the Montana State Prison as well as the Montana Women's Prison.

P&P has continued to grow at a rate suggesting the department needs a new P&P officer each month in order to keep up with the current growth from the District Courts. At this time ACCD is contemplating the growth and how to manage it to accomplish the 80% outside the prison with 20% in prison. The department is continuing with treatment for substance abuse and mental health concerns with the population on supervision and deciding where to get the best outcomes and stay within budget.

Offender Population Report:

Gary Hamel, Health, Planning and Information Services Administrator, gave an overview of the updated population report. One key point was that the current number of offenders in jail hold is lower than average, which is good for the department. See handout.

Report on collaborative efforts between Department of Corrections and Department of Public Health and Human Services:

Deb Matteucci, Behavioral Health Facilitator presented on the following collaborative efforts between corrections and health & human services:

- STEP Legislation (SB149) passed 6 – 3 in Senate Public Health. In Full Senate it passed 3rd Reading 40 – 10. It was tabled in House Appropriations. In Operations Funding (HB2) it was passed by HHS Subcommittee but was removed at request of the Executive branch as part of package of reductions to hit spending limit. This equals to a 6 month delay due to Long Range Building. Building Renovations (HB5) has been approved and project planning is underway.
- Offender Drugs program received \$950,000 which is restricted, biennial, OTO funds. It provides expansion of discharge medications, short term stabilization, bridges funds until other benefits kick in, long term support for those ineligible.
- Offender Services received \$371,647 per year, restricted funds. This provides services for adult offenders under supervision of CCD to include case management, treatment, transition support, and medication monitoring. It also provides funding for training of P & P officers in areas of mental health and addictions
- Study resolutions

Other Projects:

- Strategic Plan, 1st draft completed December 2006
- Montana Chemical Dependency Center (MCDC) Probation Intervention Project began late October 2006. 47 offenders referred to date, 38 admitted. All 8 beds full as of 5/30/2007.
- Guilty but mentally ill offenders MOU in the process.

- Admission and Discharge review teams are working together between agencies.

Mental Health Oversight Advisory Council -

- Criminal Justice System recommendations
- New Chair – Jim Fitzgerald

New Business

2007 Legislative Report:

Director Ferriter stated that the department is very close to the goal of 80/20, 80% in the community and 20% in secure custody. Probation and parole supervise approximately 9000 offenders. Population shows that it is increasing by 2 to 3 offenders a day. The session went very well for the department. The Director gave thanks for the work done on the legislative report and thanked the council for their input on it. The presentations to the subcommittees went well. There were great relationships built between all attendees of the legislative tours. The main goal that the department has made is to avoid a supplemental. Another goal is to re-evaluate how sex offenders go through the system. MSP is currently the main treatment center for these offenders.

Department of Corrections Bills:

Brenda Elias, Staff Attorney and Legislative Liaison, gave a very brief overview of the department's bills for the session. Each one is detailed in the handout.

Budget:

Rhonda Schaffer, Administrator, Administrative and Financial Services Division stated the final two-year budget for the department is \$348.6 million. That is about \$96 million, or 38 percent, more than appropriated by the 2005 Legislature. If that appropriation is adjusted to include the \$28.2 million supplemental appropriation provided by this Legislature, the net increase from the existing budget is about \$68 million, or 24 percent. The budget includes \$5.7 million in one-time appropriations. The budget includes full funding for increased per-diem payments to regional prisons as required under a 2005 law. The private prison at Shelby will receive the same increase. The original budget requested enough funding for 5,036 total beds. The final budget contains enough funding for 4,783 beds, a difference of 253 beds. The final budget is based on an average annual growth of 5.4 percent in the total number of offenders. The original budget was based on an expected yearly increase of 7.5 percent. (At the end of the regular legislative session, the department had supported a budget based on a growth of 6.25 percent.) See handout. She also went over the planning handout with the timelines and discussed the direction of the department over the biennium. See handout.

Human resource issues:

Steve Barry, Human Resources Division Administrator, reviewed some of the issues the department will be addressing in the 2008-2009 biennium. The 2007 legislative session passed legislation that will affect the department's human resources in a variety of ways. The handout he referred to covered HB13's legislated pay and benefits compensation, union contract negotiations, vacancy savings and the staff transportation initiative. He also discussed the additional FTE and reduced overtime expectations. See handout.

Offender population, information technology issues:

Gary Hamel, Health, Planning and Information Services Administrator, gave an overview of how the department projects offender populations and presented different options of models for forecasting. It was decided by the council that this issue was not theirs to decide. It may be an issue for the new council.

Recommendations regarding goals and initiatives of the next council:

- Promote having a statistician on the council
- Educate the public about corrections
- Shorter sentences equals lower recidivism rates
- Community placement options are better
- Focus on treatment, both mental health and substance abuse
- Focus on youth prevention and education
- Create a statewide offender management and data sharing system
- Promote treatment courts
- Support and maintain treatment option that are in place
- Create incentives for local governments for community based services
- Study secure care diversion alternatives for certain nonviolent offenders
- Follow youth services model for community options
- Never forget the victims

Certificates of appreciation were handed out by Chairman Bohlinger and Director Ferriter to the members for their service on the council.

Public Comment:

Robert Benton, Vice President of Four Nations Warrior Down, talked to the group about the new Montana Warrior Down prison re-entry program. He explained the process by which the Warrior Down program begins to pick up those who've come out of prison, dusts them off and helps them start again. The program is designed to help get jobs, food, clothing, and other basic needs and to reintegrate people back into the community.

Cathy Day, recently hired public policy administrator, American Civil Liberties Union of Montana, stated that the ACLU will be watching corrections with great interest. The group applauded the efforts of the state to try and deal with issues at the lowest level and supported working with treatment options and follow-up programs. She ended with stating that the concerns the ACLU had with SB547 during the session were not heeded by the legislature.

Next Meeting

At the pleasure of the Governor, after the appointment of new members.

Adjourn

Minutes condensed and summarized by Ted Ward, Directors Office, Department of Corrections. All handouts and reports can be found at the following link:

<http://cor.mt.gov/Resources/AdvisoryCouncil.asp>